EXTERIOR REHABILITATION PLAN FOR HISTORIC HOUSE
34653 FREMONT BOULEVARD | FREMONT, CA

SIEGEL & STRAIN Architects

July 21, 2014

Contents

Exterior Rehabilitation Plan for Historic House
34653 Fremont Boulevard, Fremont, California

INTRODUCTION

Siegel & Strain Architects was hired by Scott Murray of Intero Real Estate Services, Morgan Hill to develop a Rehabilitation Plan for the exterior of the historic Motha farmhouse (a.k.a. George house) at 34653 Fremont Boulevard in the Alviso district of Fremont, CA. Ancillary historic structures on the property were not included in this project. (The scope of work was verified by Terry Wong, Associate Planner, City of Fremont Planning Department in a telephone conversation with Mary Hardy of Siegel & Strain on July 14, 2014.)

Today the house—a one story wood frame and wood clad single-family residence—sits on the south side of Fremont Boulevard, a busy thoroughfare. The site (APN 543-247-163-2), once seventeen acres, is currently just over one acre in size. A new project proposed for the site will introduce six three-story multi-unit townhomes and a private street south and east of the historic house. The historic house will be retained and rehabilitated on the exterior. This report is intended to identify the extent of the exterior rehabilitation required at this time.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The exterior of the house retains most of its historic character-defining features and is generally in fair condition. There are, however, some serious problems that require immediate remediation—foundation damage, the roof and drainage system, some windows, and some wood cladding.

The house is supported on a continuous perimeter concrete footing that is seriously damaged at several locations, indicated by wide open vertical cracks through the concrete. Since the original construction, the foundation was probably under-designed for the weight of the house sitting on that particular soil. In addition, uncontrolled roof drainage may have undermined the foundation in some locations (particularly the rear corners of the house and at the bathroom wing on the west) resulting in uneven settlement over the area of the house. This condition should be assessed by a qualified structural engineer.

Another design flaw that appears to date from the original construction is the inadequate roof overhang above the shallow bay windows, particularly on the east side of the house, which is subjected most heavily to wind-driven rain. This can be remediated by replacing the existing metal gutter, added after the period of significance, with a wider gutter that is cleared of debris on a regular basis.

The composition shingle roof is currently in very poor condition. Large areas of the roof shingles are missing, roof penetrations are inadequately flashed, gutters are clogged and undersized, and downspouts (some broken) do not tie into the storm system.

Wood cladding and trim is missing or damaged in a number of locations, compromising the weather-shedding capacity of the protective building envelope. While many of the historic wood sash windows are intact, some are in poor condition and some have been replaced with inappropriate aluminum sash.

The original covered rear porch was enclosed during the period of significance. The infill wall and windows and a newer rear stair and landing are in very poor condition and require replacement. The wood stairs at the front porch are also in poor condition.

METHODOLOGY

Siegel & Strain reviewed two documents supplied by the client that provided historic background information and evaluation of the property as a historic resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): the Historic Resource Evaluation and Proposed Project Analysis prepared by Page & Turnbull, May 9, 2014, and State of California Department of Parks and Recreation 523 A (Primary) and B (Secondary) Forms prepared by Basin Research Associates in June 2002.

On July 16, 2014 Siegel & Strain's architectural conservator, Mary Hardy, and consulting architectural historian, Michael R. Corbett, surveyed the existing condition of the exterior for the purpose of identifying building deficiencies that require repair and remediation. Visibility was limited

in some locations, particularly at the northwest corner, by thick vegetation in direct contact with the house. While the scope of work for this project is limited to the exterior rehabilitation plan, the survey team surveyed the interior of the house in discern any damage visible from the interior that was caused by problems within the exterior envelope, foundation, or framing.

As a historic resource under CEQA, work affecting the historic house must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The Rehabilitation Plan complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. The primary author of the plan, Mary Hardy, meets the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualifications standards for Historic Architecture and Architectural History pursuant to 36 CFR Part 61, Appendix A.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSE & ADJACENT SITE

The house is a one-story wood frame structure sited at the northwest corner of a rectangular site approximately one acre in size (242 feet wide and 200 feet deep). Constructed ca. 1910 as a single-family residence in the Colonial Revival style, the house today faces northeast to Fremont Boulevard with minimal set back from the public sidewalk. (This report uses a simplified set of reference cardinal directions: the front of the house facing Fremont Boulevard is north, the rear of the house is south, and the side elevations are east and west.) A short concrete path leads from the public sidewalk to the front entry porch and appears to have once partially encircled the house on the north, west and south sides. Only portions of this path remain intact. An unpaved driveway runs on the east side of the house. Small fruit trees and flowering shrubs are planted close to the house on the north and east sides and at the north end of the west side.

The house is rectangular in plan with a small projecting wing near the center of the west side. The house sits on a continuous concrete perimeter foundation. The roof is hipped with a small hip-roofed dormer centered on the front. A small cross gable covers the small bath wing on the west. Eaves on the front and side elevations are soffited and embellished with shaped brackets and dentils. The embellishments are not applied at the rear. The house is clad in channel-rustic wood siding with flat corner boards and foundation trim. The house is entered from a slightly raised recessed porch with three Tuscan columns atop a railing wall and support a paneled frieze. Shallow bay windows occur at the front and east elevations.

The windows are primarily one-over-one double-hung wood sash. A horizontal casement window flanks the front door and three 3-light attic windows appear at the front of the dormer. Some of the windows have been replaced with aluminum sash.

In addition to the aluminum replacement windows, alterations are limited. The rear covered porch was enclosed sometime during the period of significance. The unpainted rear stairs and landing were added after the period of significance as were the metal roof gutters and downspouts. A modern rear door, security screen doors, and window air conditioning unit are all later additions.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The exterior of the house retains a high level of integrity, and appears to be in generally fair condition. There are, however, some existing conditions that require immediate remediation: the foundation, the roof and drainage system, some windows, and some wood cladding. Other recommendations address the long term condition of the house.

Foundation:
The house is supported on a continuous perimeter concrete foundation that appears to be seriously damaged at several locations, where vertical cracks—up to one inch in width—have opened through the concrete. There is no evidence of steel reinforcing in the concrete. The cracks appear about five feet from the outside corners of the house and appear to be tied to uneven settlement in those areas. The original design and construction of the foundation was very likely under-engineered for the house and soil condition. It also appears to be tied to uncontrolled roof drainage, which may have undermined the footings.

At the interior, there are diagonal cracks in the wall plaster and the floor slopes down toward the exterior corners, confirmed that the house has settled unevenly. This is most apparent at the pantry (southwest corner) and on the west at the bathroom wing.

Roof and Drainage:
The roof, sheathed in multiple layers of composition shingles is currently in very poor condition. Large areas of the roof shingles are missing. The roof penetrations—brick chimney, dormer, exhaust pipes—are inadequately flashed. Metal gutters, not original to the house, are clogged and undersized at some locations. Downspouts, some of them broken, are not tied to the storm system.

Wood Cladding:
The walls are sheathed in channel rustic wood siding with flat board corner trim. Some wood cladding and trim are missing, split or otherwise damaged. This has compromised the weather-shedding capacity of the building envelope and allowed moisture to migrate to the wood structure and interior finishes.

Windows:
While many of the historic wood sash windows are intact, some of these are in poor condition. Damage is most evident at the bottom rails. Some windows have been replaced with aluminum sash, which is incompatible with the historic character of the house.

Alterations:
The original covered rear porch was enclosed during the period of significance. Here, the original exterior cladding, double hung wood window, rear doors and trim were left intact at what became the interior walls of a mudroom. The sloping wood floorboards were also left in place. These features—with the exception of the historic five-panel doors—remain intact today. The wood floor is very worn and the doorframe was damaged during a recent break-in. The exterior infill wall was of vertical tongue & groove boards below a band of multi-pane wood sash windows. Only one bay of the historic windows remains; it is in poor condition. The other windows were replaced with aluminum sash. The entire infill wall is currently in very poor condition. An unpainted wood rear stair and landing, also in very poor condition, were added after the period of significance.

Landscape:
Shrubs and fruit trees planted at the perimeter of the house are now overgrown and are in direct contact with some windows and siding. They are especially overgrown at the northwest corner. A high fence that runs parallel to the street from the house to the western property line is also overgrown with vegetation.

Views of the historic house from Fremont Boulevard are now obstructed by the overgrown vegetation.

Ornament:
The wood ornament at the eaves and front porch appears to be intact and in good condition. However, some soffit boards are warped from water damage. Decorative iron grilles once covered the foundation vents. These are all now missing except in one location.

REHABILITATION PLAN

General:
Retain all character-defining features:

- Rustic channel siding
- Flat board trim at corners and at level of floor
- Soffited eaves
- Dentil molding and elongated carved brackets below eaves
- Wood sash windows: typically double-hung, three-pane at dormer, multi-pane at rear porch.
- Wood multi-paneled doors
- Roof forms: hipped roof at main roof and dormer, gable roof at bath wing
- Tuscan columns at front porch
- Paneled frieze at front elevation
- Recessed and molded gable end at bath wing
- Decorative iron grilles at foundation vent

Where these features are damaged, repair them. Where missing, replace in-kind.

Remove incompatible alterations that occurred after the period of significance, i.e., after 1952. If documentation is available to know what the original element looked like, replace these elements to match the original. If historic documentation is lacking, replace with simple elements that defer to the historic fabric. Incompatible alterations include:

- Aluminum sash windows
- Flush panel doors
- Unpainted rear stair and landing
- Window air conditioning unit

Foundation and Structural Frame:
Repair and upgrade as required:

- Concrete foundation
- Roof framing
- Structural frame.

This work will require the expertise of a qualified structural engineer to inspect the existing conditions and design code-compliant repairs and—if required—upgrades.

Remediate the foundation and floor framing as needed to level the floors of the house.

Roof and Drainage:

- Remove all built up layers of shingles
- Verify that wood sheathing and roof framing members are sound. This will require the expertise of a qualified structural engineer, who may recommend applying plywood sheathing at roof for shear.
- Properly flash roof and all roof penetrations—brick chimney, dormer, exhaust flues.
- Re-roof with new shingles.
- Replace existing gutters and downspouts with new gutters and downspouts sized to efficiently remove rainwater especially above the bay windows.
- Tie downspouts to storm water system.
- Clear gutters of debris on a regular basis.

Brick Chimney:

- Flash chimney at roof penetration.
- Where the mortar is missing or in a deteriorated condition, repoint the brick using a mortar that matches the original in strength and color.
- Ensure that the chimney remains in working condition.

Siding:

- Replace all split, damaged and missing siding and trim boards. Matching original profiles and dimensions.
- Replace broken access door to crawl space at rear elevation.
- Patch holes in siding that accommodated prior wires and attachments.
- Add flashing below siding and trim at locations (such as the bay windows) where moisture penetration has been a chronic problem.
- Where distance between wood and soil is insufficient, excavate soil adjacent to house to drain away from the structure.
- Properly prep and paint all wood surfaces

Ornament:
Retain, properly prep and paint all decorative wood elements. Proper prep is important to retain crisp profiles and ornamental detail.

- Elongated carved brackets under the eaves
- Dentil molding under the eaves
- Tuscan columns at front porch
- Panel frieze at front elevation
- Scrolled sill under the casement window at the porch

Replace decorative grille covers at foundation vents to match original.

Windows
- Repair and refurbish all wood sash windows to operable condition. Where windows are too deteriorated for repair, replace with new (custom made) or salvaged wood sash windows that match the originals in all details.
- Replace all aluminum sash windows with new (custom made) or salvaged wood sash windows that match the originals in all details. Replace rear porch windows with multi-pane wood windows that match the one intact window at west end.
- Repair wood casings and sills. Where these are too deteriorated for repair, replace with new or salvaged material matching the originals in all details.

Doors
- Remove existing doors at rear porch and replace with new (custom made) or salvaged wood door that matches the original doors in all details. One original farmhouse door is currently used on the Granary and could be salvaged for use at the house.
- Remove metal security screen doors at front and rear doors.
- Repair damaged door frame at rear porch and kitchen. Match original profile.

Hardware
- Replace missing hardware in kind.
- Where current code requires change of hardware, use simple modern hardware that defers visually to the historic fabric.

Porches

FRONT PORCH:
- Replace badly worn wood floor boards between the entry and stairs. Match the dimensions of the existing floorboards. Leave sound boards in place.
- Rebuild stairs to match existing and secure them to the structural frame of the house.
- Prepare all painted surfaces and repaint.

REAR PORCH:
- Rebuild infill walling with vertical tongue and groove siding below multi-paned wood sash to match the historic infill.
- Flash exposed end of wood floor to protect from moisture and insects.
- No documentation of the original stairs was found during this project. Replace existing stair and landing with painted wood stair designed to meet current code.
- Retain original exterior siding, trim, window and doors at porch interior.
- Replace badly worn wood floor boards, but retain all sound boards. Match the dimensions of the existing floorboards.

Misc.
- Remove abandoned surface mounted electrical wires and equipment and patch holes.
- Removed abandoned hose bibs
- Remove abandoned exhaust flues
- Remove abandoned surface mounted telephone equipment and wires and patch holes.
- Remove abandoned metal attachments and patch surface.
- Relocate meters to less visible location or conceal in wood cabinet.
- Remove window air conditioning unit on east.
- Remove antennae from east side of the house.

Landscape

- Cut back overgrown vegetation adjacent to the structure.
- Vegetation holds moisture against the wood siding and accelerates its deterioration. It also provides habitat for wood damaging insects and animals. It also causes abrasion and impact damage.
- Trim and maintain vegetation adjacent to the structure (especially at northwest corner of house) to enhance visibility from public street and sidewalk.
- Retain sufficient spatial openness surrounding the house to convey the property's single-family residential use.
- Retain historic concrete path between public sidewalk and front porch and partially encircling the house. Replace in kind in areas where missing.
- Plant vegetation to visually buffer the house from new construction at the site.

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs were taken by Siegel & Strain Architects (S&S) July 16, 2014, unless otherwise noted.

Cover: Front (north) elevation with centered dormer and entry in the otherwise asymmetrical facade. Looking south.

Figure 01: Front (north) elevation, looking south.

Figure 02: Front (north) elevation, looking west.

Figure 03: Northeast corner of house, looking south.

Figure 04: Looking west toward east (side) elevation (obscured by vegetation) and front (north) elevation at right.

Figure 05: Detail of east elevation, looking north toward shallow bay window.

Figure 06: Southeast corner of house, looking northwest toward enclosed rear porch and added stair and landing.

Figure 07: Rear elevation, looking northeast, with broken access door to foundation crawl space.

Figure 08: Southwest corner of house, looking north toward small projecting bath wing.

Figure 09: Detail of west elevation, looking east toward the small gable-roofed bath wing.

Figure 10: Detail of south end of west elevation. The open vertical crack through the concrete perimeter foundation appears to be tied to uneven settlement.

Figure 11: Diagonal cracks in interior plaster and sloping floors correspond to vertical cracks through the foundation.

Figure 12: Roof shingles are missing from areas of the roof including the north side of the main roof and dormer roof.

Figure 13: Detail of north elevation and dormer, showing elongated brackets and dentils below sofitted eaves. These ornamental features also occur at the side elevations, but not at the rear elevation.

Figure 14: Southeast corner with detached downspout.

Figure 15: Detail of southeast corner showing moss growing on the concrete foundation. Downspouts are not tied to the storm water system and have contributed to foundation damage.

Figure 16: Detail of bay window at east elevation, where roof overhang is not sufficient to protect it from rain. Original wood windows have been replaced with aluminum sash in this location.

Figure 17: Detail of interior ceiling plaster damaged by water infiltration at bay window on east elevation, looking southeast (see also Figure 16).

Figure 18: Detail of bay window at east elevation. Rain water is able to enter the structure through open joints in the wood trim and can lead to damage of interior finishes and wood structural members.

Figure 19: Detached downspout at southeast corner of the house has led to damage of the soffit board and light fixture.

Figure 20: Broken access door to foundation crawl space and missing wood siding at rear elevation.

Figure 21: Detail of rear elevation below enclosed porch. Exposed pipe serves water heater on porch. Relocation of water heater and pipe is recommended.

Figure 22: Original double hung wood sash windows at front porch are intact and in relatively good condition.

Figure 23: Original wood sash window with ornamental apron adjacent to front entry.

Figure 24: Detail of front elevation showing three-light wood sash windows at dormer.

Figure 25: Damaged bottom rail at wood sash window on east elevation. Wood windows should be refurbished, and where necessary, rebuilt to match original wood windows.

Figure 26: Wood window at rear elevations was damaged during a recent break-in. Wood windows should be refurbished, or where necessary, rebuilt to match original wood windows.

Figure 27: Window air conditioning unit on east.

Figure 28: Asymmetrical aluminum sash replacement windows are not in character with the historic house and should be replaced with wood sash windows matching the originals.

Figure 29: Detail of enclosed rear porch with historic multi-pane window at left behind pipe and aluminum slider replacement window at right above tongue and grove infill wall.

Figure 30: Infill wall viewed from the interior of the enclosed porch with historic multi-pane window at right. Infill wall and windows are in poor condition and should be rebuilt with multi-pane windows that match the historic windows.

Figure 31: Wood steps leading to front porch and entry are worn and have pulled away from the house. They should be rebuilt matching original and securely attached to the structure.

Figure 32: Detail of front elevation showing overgrown vegetation adjacent to font porch.

Figure 33: Front porch looking west.

Figure 34: Front porch looking east.

Figure 35: Narrow horizontal openings through the wood siding allows the sloping floor boards at the front porch to drain.

Figure 36: Detail of unpainted wood stairs and landing, in poor condition, with rear porch infill wall beyond. The stairs and landing were built after the period of significance and should be replaced with code compliant stair and rails painted like the house.

Figure 37: Enclosed rear porch looking northeast with original exterior siding, double-hung wood window and sloping wood floor still intact.

Figure 38: Enclosed rear porch looking west. Water heater, which exhausts through the historic multi-pane window, should be relocated and exhaust through the roof.

Figure 39: Detail of front eaves and dormer. Roof is in poor condition and requires replacement and flashing of roof penetrations including the dormer, brick chimney, and exhaust pipes.

Figure 40: Detail of gable-roofed bathroom wing. Exterior mounted plumbing and exhaust should be rerouted.

Figure 41: Decorative iron grille at foundation on west side of house. Only one grille is intact; all others are missing.

Figure 42: Foundation vent with missing grille.

Figure 43: House viewed from Fremont Boulevard, looking southeast. Overgrown vegetation obscures the house from public view and should be cut back and maintained.

Figure 44: House viewed from Fremont Boulevard, looking southwest. New development, sited east and south of the house, should allow an unobstructed view of the house from Fremont Boulevard.

Figure 45: Overgrown vegetation at north end of west elevation.

Figure 46: Overgrown vegetation at west end of front elevation.

Figure 47: Overgrown vegetation at southwest corner of bathroom wing, west elevation.

Figure 48: A concrete path leads from the public sidewalk to the front porch and encircled the house. Portions remain and should be protected.

Figure 49: Abandoned surface mounted attachments should be removed and wood elements patched.

Figure 50: Abandoned surface mounted telephone equipment should be removed and wood siding patched.

Figure 51: Surface mounted electrical equipment should be relocated and wood siding and soffit patched.

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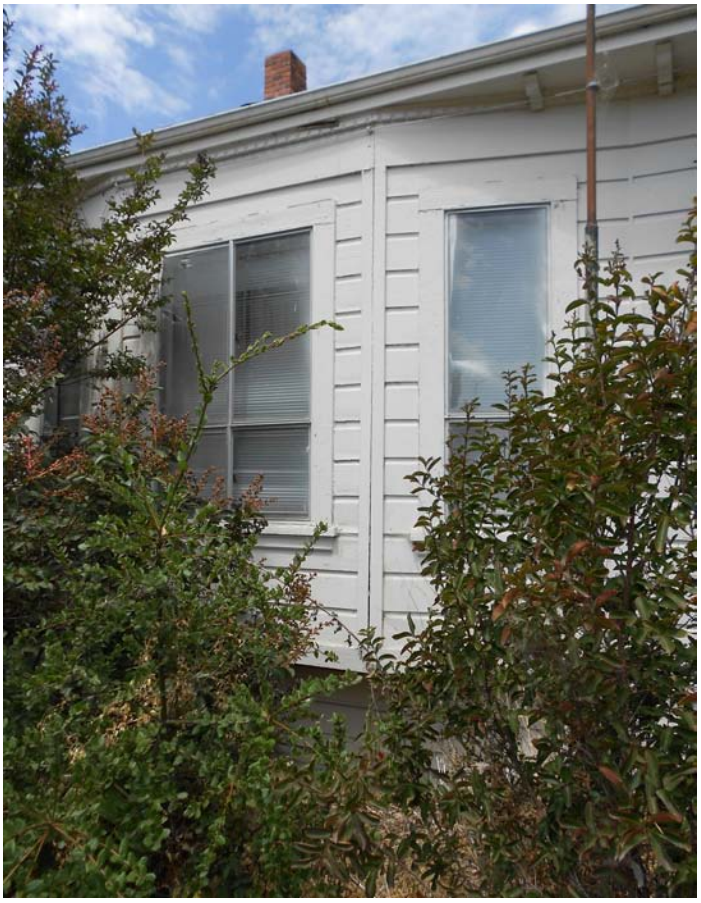

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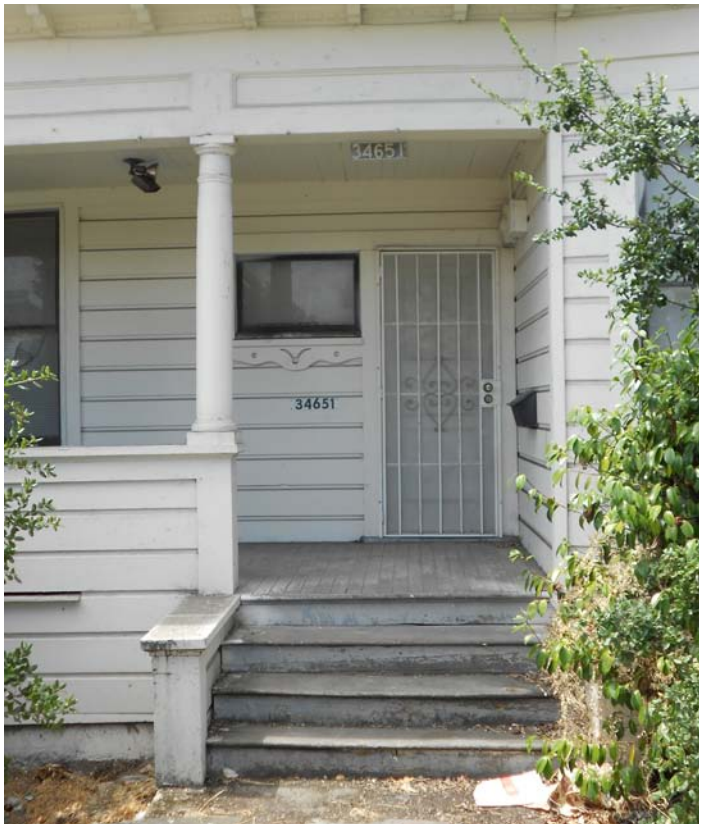

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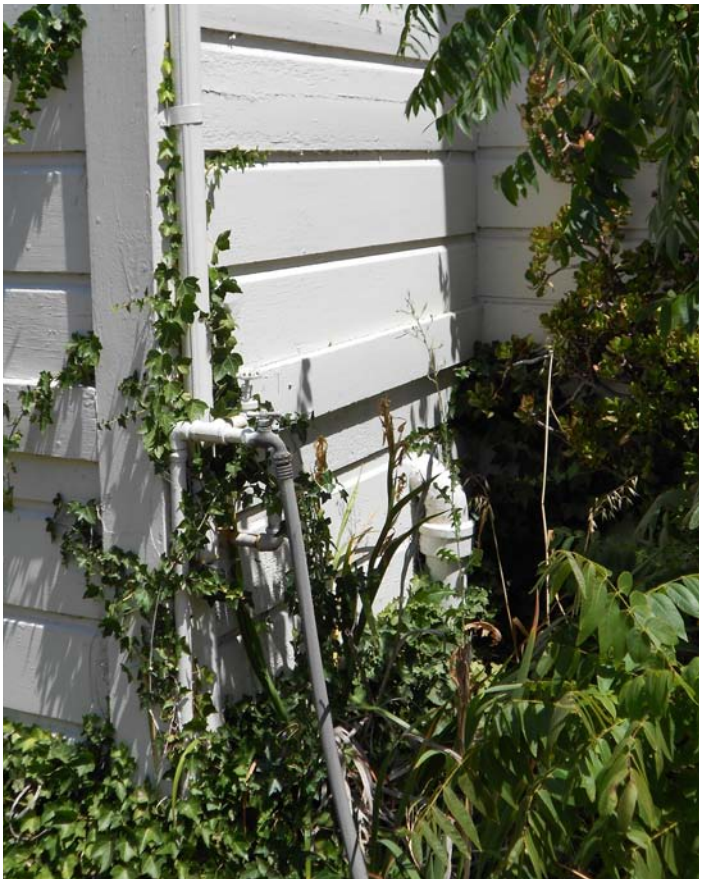

Figure 47: Overgrown vegetation at southwest corner of bathroom wing, west elevation. (July, 2014) (S&S)

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Telephone conversation between Mary Hardy of Siegel & Strain Architects and Terry Wong, Associate Planner, City of Fremont Planning Department. July 14, 2014.

Conversation between Alan George, owner, and Mary Hardy and Michael Corbett at the property on July 16, 2014.